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# A DELIGHTFUL PICTURE ALPHABET

MESSRS. BLACKIE AND SON have published a book\* which is in every way charmingly attractive. It is an Alphabet, illustrated (and presumably written) by Mr. Carton Moore Park. Each letter of the Alphabet has a preliminary initial sketch of its animal, generally in line and in various positions, then an account of it in naïvely simple terms, then a full-page black and white study. Messrs. Blackie kindly offering us a picture, we have chosen "M for Mice," because it is not only admirable in its *go*, but appeals perhaps to the greatest number. All the pictures are interesting, and some are about as good as animals can be. The Vampire is not good [or has he only been drinking?]; the Jackal is ill—very ill we fear—and the Sheep are depressed; but the Tiger, the Elephant, the Kangaroo, the Ibex and the Camel are there to the life. It is certainly the best book of the kind we have ever seen; indeed, the artist's broad and strong handling quite separates it from any other. Mr. Park has so good an eye for animal form that we look to see more serious work from his brush.

\* *An Alphabet of Animals*, by Carton Moore Park. (London: Blackie and Son, Ltd., 1899.)

# RUSKIN, ROSSETTI AND PRE-RAPHAELISM

A book which in respect of its appearance is hardly worthy of Ruskin's publisher, being in fact exceedingly ugly, while the case with which it is covered is vile, scarcely holding its pages together: but this same book, although produced, it may be supposed, with the smallest possible trouble, and containing a great deal that could be dispensed with, must nevertheless be ceded a place on our shelves, there being a certain amount of interesting matter therein which has not been published elsewhere, and he who already possesses the letters addressed by Rossetti to William Allingham, which appeared some time in last year, will most probably welcome this volume.\* It is a pity, however, that works so closely

\* *Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelism*. Arranged and Edited by W. M. Rossetti. (London: George Allen, 1899.)

related as to the subject-matter could not have been published by the same firm, for uniformity in such cases is very desirable, and it would have been pleasant to be able to place the two side by side, whereas the comparison now would be odious, and would damage the later work.

It would be unfair to the diligent Editor to allow our notice to end at this point, and there is luckily room on this page for the praise which his book deserves. Mr. William Rossetti, who draws from what would appear to be an almost inexhaustible store, is supplying us by degrees with material for supplementary Histories of the Pre-Raphaelites, for which we may live to be thankful: the account we find here, for instance, of the exhibition of works by the leading men in this movement which, organised by a certain Captain Notn, was opened in New York on the 19th of October, 1857, and created the greatest excitement. Said the Captain to William Rossetti, referring to one of Madox Brown's pictures: 'Admirers and abusers of P.R.B-ism alike join in its praise,' and it will be gathered from his letters that the amount of interest raised was remarkable. To this event we attribute, as there are records of not a few sales, the opening of a market for English pictures, which we hope may long be maintained, and that neither wars nor rumours of wars will arise to prevent the free and easy exchange of things of great worth, namely dollars, for paintings that cumber the earth.

A reprint of the Prospectus issued by the 'now famous decorative firm of Morris & Co.,' containing the names of the eight original members, may be found on page 168. On pages 216-217 a list of as many of 'The Hogarth Club' as were artists in the year 1859. A most notable list it is, and a very great pity it seems that an institution so nobly born should have failed as it has for want of support.

Amongst the twelve illustrations the one that should be valued most is of 'Burd Helen,' by W. L. Windus, exhibited at Burlington House in 1856; the others being all by Rossetti. We read for the first, and perhaps for the last time, a number of Miss Siddal's poems. Putting these with what we know of her drawings, we feel assured that Genius in no small measure was hers: that there left the world when Death claimed her a frail and beautiful being who, with all a woman's capacity for loving and being loved, had less than the strength it requires.

The *miscellanea*, as we have said, are interesting, although the critic is not to be blamed who declines to read letters addressed to William's 'Mamma,' and the drivel in rhyme which Dante produced at times, but the interest centres in what we learn as we read of Madox Brown and John Ruskin. The most generous view of his character that can be taken is that which as likely as not will be formed after reading what he himself said in the course of a very long letter to Dante Rossetti. We feel as we read that he speaks as anyone might whose experiences were in any way similar. He would seem to have said to himself that if wealth could not procure what he lacked it might at least be of use to others: hence his almost infinite kindness to men after his heart like Rossetti, and his tender solicitude in respect of Miss Siddall. We feel as we read that he would have helped her to live, while marriage most probably killed her.

Sollicitous as an old maid, and fussy as a confirmed neuropath; talking outrageous bosh about Art in the most arrogant possible manner, he was nevertheless right in the main, and quite right, Rossetti thought, in holding such generous views about what are called debts of honour. He would have his money 'accepted as readily as a glass of water when it is wanted,' and that suited the poet exactly. The way in which it slipped through his fingers even when he was making about £3000 a year can never be satisfactorily explained, says his ever affectionate brother.